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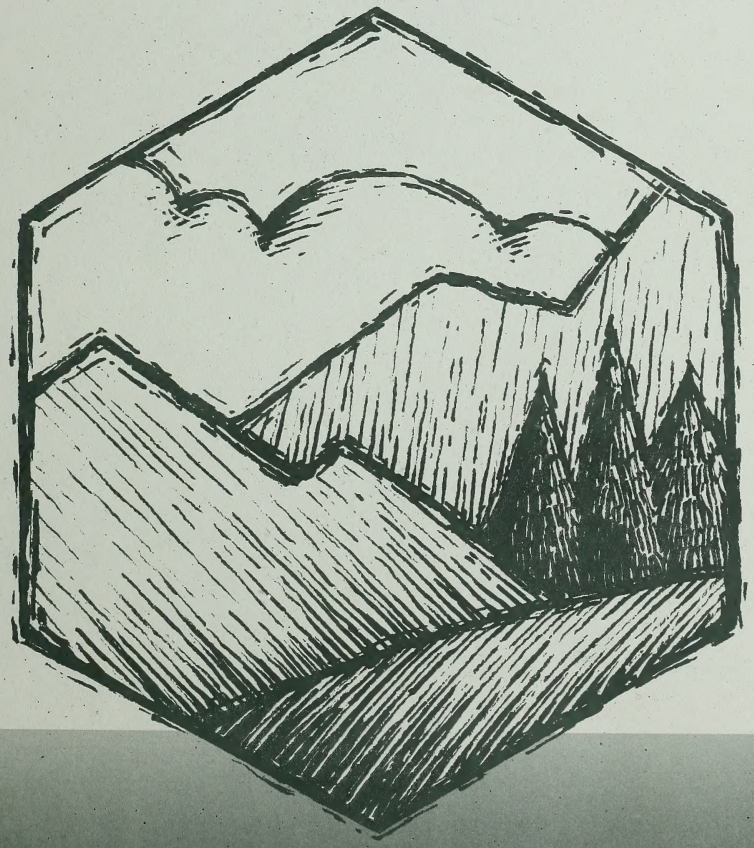
CANMORE FLATS

NATURAL AREA

Management Plan



Alberta
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Natural Resources Service

CANMORE FLATS

NATURAL AREA

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Natural Resources Service

March 1997

Copies of this management plan may be obtained from:

Land Resource Agrologist
Public Land Services
Field Services Sector
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
703 - 6th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 0T9
(403) 297-6426

or

Natural Resource Services - Parks Management/Fish and Wildlife
Alberta Environmental Protection
Suite 201, 800 Railway Ave.
Canmore, Alberta
T1W 1P1
(403) 678-5508

APPROVAL STATEMENT

Recognizing the value of the Canmore Flats Natural Area for education, conservation and recreation, we hereby commit to managing Canmore Flats Natural consistent with the intent and guidelines as set out in this Management Plan.

Dave Nielsen — 2 Dec 96
Date

Dave Nielsen
Director, Natural Resources Service
Southern East Slopes Region
Alberta Environmental Protection

Dec 20/96
Date

Morris Seiferling
Head, Public Land Services
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

This plan is consistent with the provisions and intent of the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act and with provincial policies, priorities and direction.

Jan 10/97
Date

Jim Nichols
Assistant Deputy Minister
Natural Resources Service
Alberta Environmental Protection

Public Land Service, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development agree to co-ordinate and implement this management plan and to administer the Natural Area.

Jan 6/97
Date

Les Lyster
Assistant Deputy Minister
Field Services
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

Canmore Flats Natural Area comprises 577 ha (1425 acres) of protected crown land in the Bow Corridor, west of Calgary (Figure 1). It is situated on the floodplain of the Bow River, with a vegetation complement of mixedwood stands of aspen, balsam poplar and spruce, white spruce communities, willow shrubland and a variety of wetlands.

The site is managed by the Public Land Services of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development with assistance from Natural Resources Service, Southern East Slopes Region, Environmental Protection.

1.1 What Are Natural Areas?

Natural Areas are public lands, set aside under the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act (Appendix I) to:

(a) protect sensitive or scenic public land from disturbance, and

(b) ensure the availability of public land in a natural state for use by the public for recreation, education or any other purpose.

Natural Areas are one of the categories in a spectrum of recreation and protected areas that are formally established to achieve four broad objectives: preservation, heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation and tourism. Natural areas are defined as "areas selected as representative, special or sensitive natural landscapes and features of the province which are set aside to protect their natural values and provide opportunities for nature appreciation, education and low intensity recreation."

1.2 What Is This Management Plan All About?

There are a number of reasons why this plan was prepared by Natural Resources Service in consultation with various stakeholder groups and the general public. First, the potential of increasing use is high and might result in significant negative pressure on the resources of the natural area, both in biophysical impacts and in reduced and perhaps conflicting opportunities for users. Second, managers and citizens have become increasingly concerned about these impacts and changes in natural area conditions and experiences. Third, natural area legislation provides general protection status but does not address site specific needs. Consequently, a site specific management plan is required.

This plan is directed at managing use of the Natural Area. Adherence to this plan may reduce or prevent unacceptable resource and social conditions and restore the natural qualities found within the natural area. This plan also establishes a process for managing the natural area cooperatively between government and public users.

1.3 Plan Limitations

This management plan is limited by the completeness and quality of the existing information that is available for the site. Additional information will be forthcoming and will have to be considered in plan amendments.

The management guidelines that are stated in the plan are policy only and are not enforceable under any regulation that is specific to Natural Areas. The philosophy of Natural Areas management is one of education rather than regulation. However, activities such as tree cutting, littering and soil extraction are either prohibited or controlled by legislation that is applicable to public land in general or the Municipal District of Bighorn in particular. Hunting, fishing and trapping are activities which are permitted subject to existing legislation and regulations (e.g., licenses, season dates, bag limits).

1.4 What Process Was Used To Develop This Plan?

The development of this plan was coordinated by staff of the Natural Resources Service Heritage Protection and Education Branch as well as parks management staff of the Southern East Slopes Region and followed these steps:

- o October/90 researched background information on file with Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife;
- o October/90 interviewed interested agencies, public users and other stakeholders;
- o November/90 established a Management Advisory Committee from stakeholder groups, including Mr. Brian Evans (M.L.A., Banff-Cochrane), Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division - Eastern Slopes Region, Alberta Public Lands Division (Calgary), Alberta Environment, the Municipal District of Bighorn, the Town of Canmore, Alberta Tourism, The Calgary Regional Planning Commission, the University of Lethbridge, Bow Valley Naturalists and the volunteer steward - Upper Bow Valley Fish and Game Association;

- o December/90 Management Advisory Committee identified management concerns, public issues and overall Natural Area direction;
- o December/90 held open house session to allow for public review of draft terms of reference;
- o January/91 finalized terms of reference for management planning process;
- o March/91 circulated draft management plan to Management Advisory Committee;
- o April/91 revised draft plan based on Management Advisory Committee's comments;
- o May/91 held open house session to allow for public review of draft management plan;
- o May/91 revised draft management plan;
- o June/91 revised draft plan reviewed by Management Advisory Committee;
- o June/91 prepared final draft plan and summary of public open house input;
- o June/91 final draft plan reviewed by Management Advisory Committee;
- o July/91 approval of the draft plan by Alberta Fish and Wildlife and Public Lands Division representatives; and
- o December/93 final draft plan review coordinated by Kananaskis Country, Natural Resources Service of Environmental Protection.

1.5 Intent for the Canmore Flats Natural Area

The intent of the Canmore Flats Natural Area is:

a. To maintain natural ecological diversity, ecological processes, native species and habitats;

b. To protect rare and significant natural features;

c. To facilitate educational use.

d. To permit a wide range of activities (especially research and recreation) where compatible with the primary intent of protection.

2. OVERVIEW

2.1 Location

The 577 ha (1425 acres) Canmore Flats Natural Area is within the Municipal District of Bighorn less that 1 km east of Canmore, Alberta (Figure 1).

The Natural Area is bordered on the north and east by Canadian Pacific Railway tracks and to the south and west by Highway #1. To the northwest and south lies the Town of Canmore. There is a triangular parcel of crown-owned land in LSD 11 of section 14 which abuts a portion of the Natural Area. As well, LSD 16 of Section 15 north east of the Trans Canada Highway has recently been acquired by the Crown through a land exchange. These lands will be added to the Natural Area in the near future. To the east is the Bow Flats Natural Area.

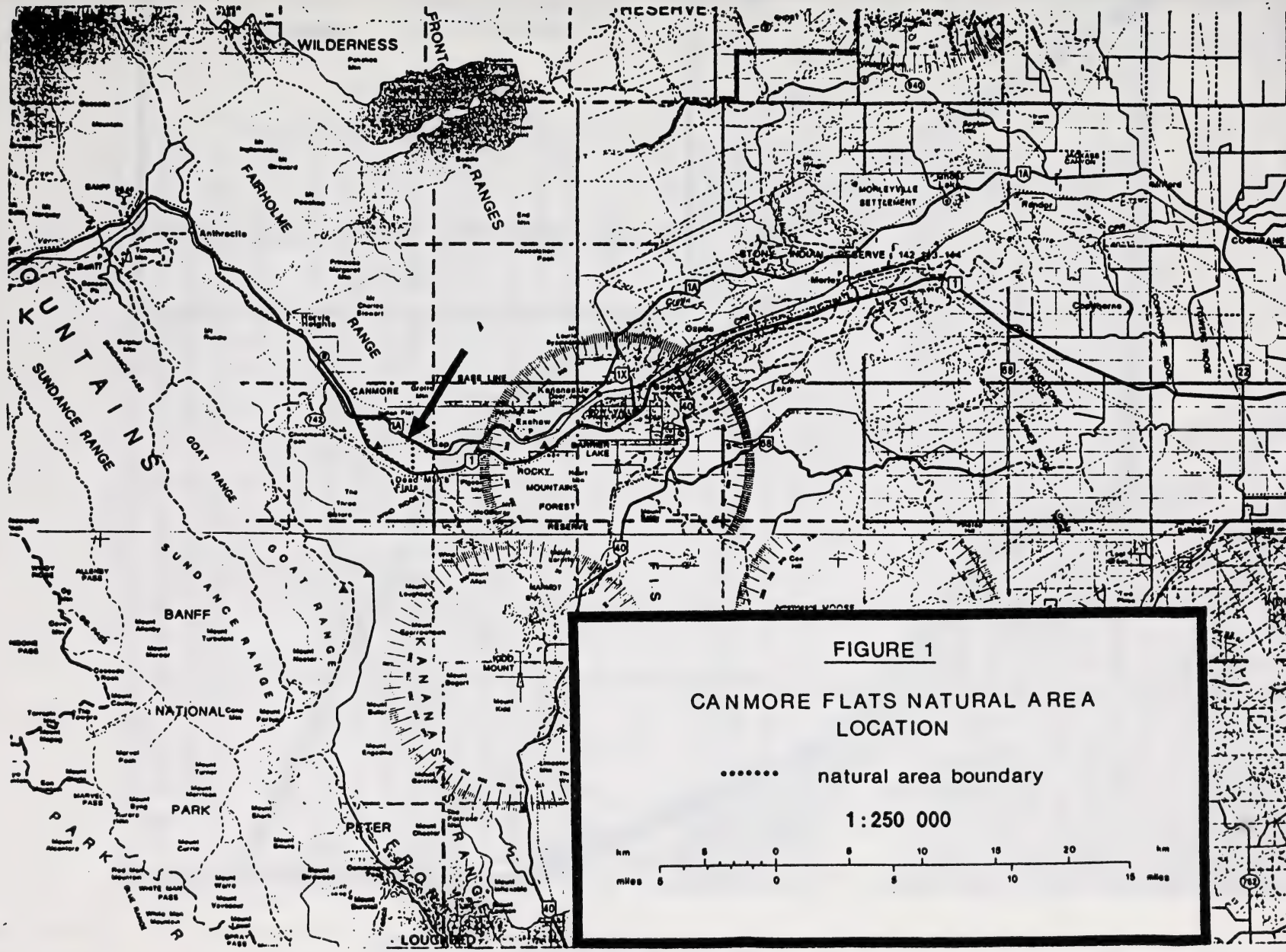
The legal description is Twp 24, Rge 10, W5, in portions of sections 14,15, 22, 23, 26, 27 and 28 (Figure 2). Exclusions include the west half of section 22, required for a Wayside Campsite as shown on Plan ll6JK; the southeast quarter of section 22 required for a road as shown on Plan 731490; and that portion of LSD 3, 6 and 11 of section 27, which comprise miscellaneous leases 904 and 1609 and part LSD 11 of section 14-24-10-W5M which is privately owned.

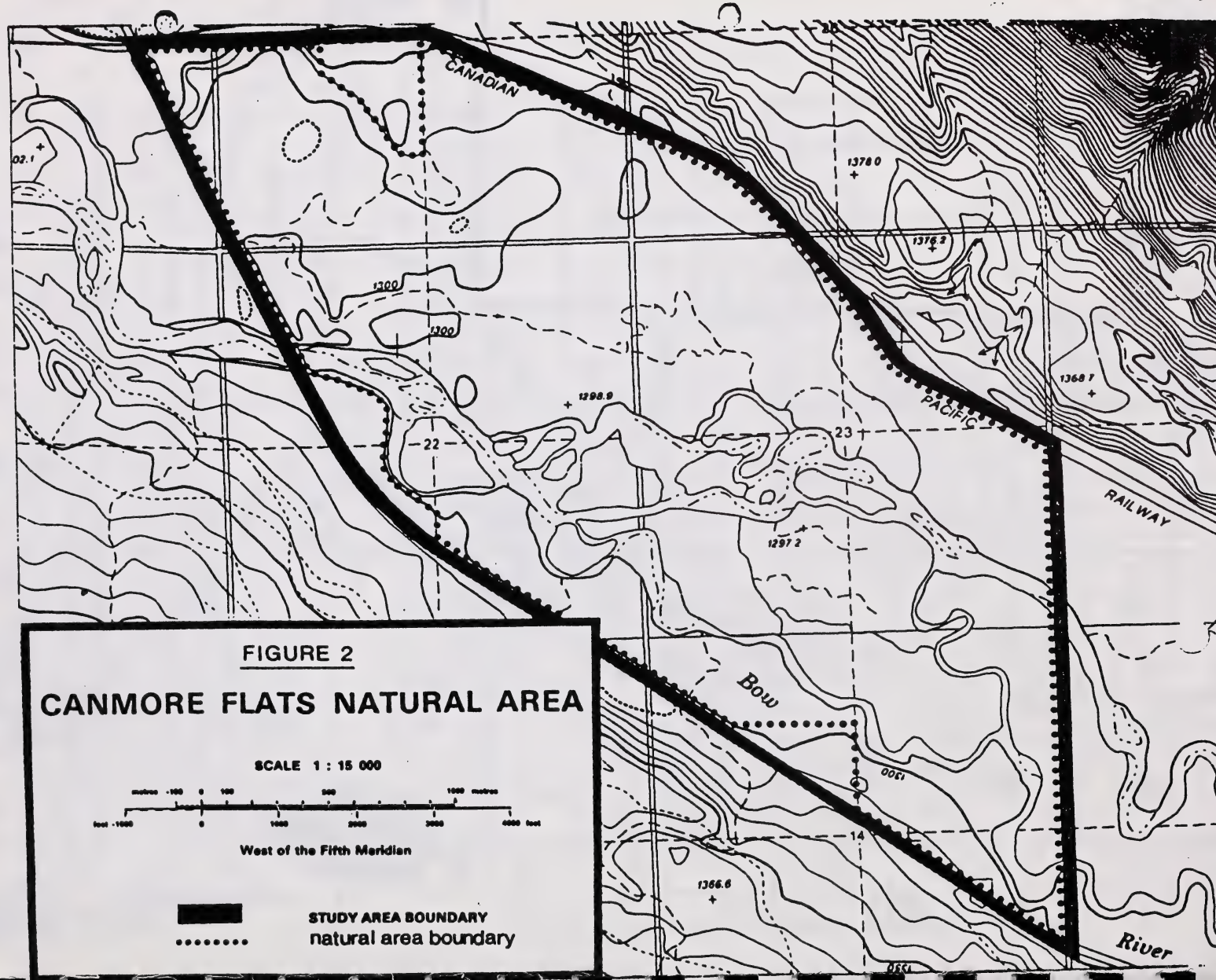
2.2 Biophysical Resources

2.2.1 Physical Features

The Canmore Flats Natural Area lies between 1295 and 1310 meters above sea level and is found within the Montane Subregion of the Rocky Mountain Natural Region. This specific unit of montane is on the floodplain of the Bow River and is closely bordered to the north and south by alpine and sub-alpine environments.

Surfacial materials in the Natural Area are post glacial deposits, primarily alluvial silts and gravels. While numerous alluvial fans occur at the confluence of the Bow River and


WILDERNESS
FRONT RANGES
FARHOLME
RANGE
SUNDANCE RANGE
GOAT RANGE
CANMORE
BANFF
NATIONAL
PARK
PETER
LOUGHEED
ROCKY MOUNTAINS FOREST RESERVE
STONE INDIAN RESERVE
MORLEYVILLE SETTLEMENT
COCHRANE
KANANASKIS RANGE
FIGURE 1
CANMORE FLATS NATURAL AREA
LOCATION
natural area boundary
1:250 000
km
miles


CANADIAN
PACIFIC
RAILWAY
Bow
River
1378.0
1316.2
1368.7
1298.9
1297.2
1366.6
1300
1300
1300
1300
22
23
14
FIGURE 2
CANMORE FLATS NATURAL AREA
SCALE 1 : 15 000
West of the Fifth Meridian
STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
natural area boundary

its tributary streams, only that of the Three Sisters Creek reaches the Natural Area. A thin veneer of alluvial silt marks the gravel bars of the floodplain, with a higher proportion of silt to gravel found within the Natural Area itself. The underlying bedrock is primarily Mississippian limestone and shales, and Devonian dolomite and sandstone.

The major waterway is the main and south channels of the Bow River. Near the centre of the area is a small backwater stream connecting the two channels, and to the north, springfed Bill Griffiths Creek and a seasonally active channel connected to the river. The springs that create Bill Griffiths Creek also give rise to numerous seepage areas in the northern portion of the Natural Area.

2.2.2 Soils

No soil profiles have been done specific to the Natural Area. However, investigations by Knapik (1974) immediately west of the area have described floodplain soils as being predominantly poorly-drained Rego-Gleysols and moderately well-drained Cumulic Regosols. Soils on northern aspects are Luvisolic, showing the influence of cool, moist conditions, while Brunisolic soils developed on the drier and warmer southwest aspects. It is expected that similar soil/site correlations will be present within the Canmore Flats Natural Area.

2.2.3 Vegetation

There are eight distinct vegetation units present (Timoney, 1990), and most are affected by the hydrology of the site. The dominant vegetation type is a mature white spruce forest (54% cover), occurring on subxeric to hygric silty to sandy alluvium. The understorey varies depending on site conditions, but is usually either a bearberry/wolf willow/rose, rye grass/sedge or willow/sedge composition. The active floodplain supports a dynamic vegetation complex of willow, wolf willow and graminoid (grass-like) meadows within a subhygric to hygric (moist to wet) moisture regime. Grazing has changed the natural composition of an area of aspen/willow-rose/grass located in the extreme northwest corner of the Natural Area. Balsam poplar or poplar-aspen-white spruce forests are present in small amounts, as are sedge and brown moss meadows, willow thickets and a young spruce/herb/hair grass association.

2.2.4 Fish and Wildlife

The Bow River is an internationally recognized trout fishery (Longmore and Stenton, 1981). Fish species include mountain whitefish, brown trout and brook trout. Bill Griffiths Creek contains brook trout and a brown trout spawning area (Alberta, 1990). A 1989 fish survey indicates that 73 percent of the brown trout spawning in the Bow between Bow Falls and Seebe occurs in Bill Griffiths Creek.

Moose, elk and mule deer can be seen in this area. Elk likely use the area for calving (O'Leary, 1988). Black bear tracks have been found along the main and south channels and coyote can be found all along the river banks. Beaver are abundant, especially in the abandoned channels. Signs of porcupine, snowshoe hare and lynx were present in the spruce forests. Least chipmunks and red squirrels are abundant throughout the Natural Area.

Forty eight bird species have been identified in the Natural Area, including great grey and horned owls, osprey, goldeneye duck, common merganser, American dipper, varied thrush, Townsend's warbler, northern waterthrush, Leconte's sparrow, fox sparrow, northern oriole and purple finch.

No information exists for reptiles, amphibians or invertebrates within this site.

2.3 Land Use

Trails, campsites and pictographs provide evidence that the Bow Valley in general was used by aboriginal peoples in prehistoric times. In the late 1800s, timber operations, tourism and coal and mineral development began with the construction of the rail road to Banff, and most of these activities still exist today. Also during this time, the Old Banff Coach Road which passes beside Canmore Flats was established to provide for carriage and later auto travel for touring. Currently, the expansion of Canmore, tourism and recreational activities are the fastest growing land uses around Canmore Flats Natural Area. Although current recreational use within the Natural Area is low, a variety of public activities occur, including:

- wildlife viewing
- hiking
- berry and mushroom picking
- horse riding
- research
- fishing
- camping
- canoeing
- bow hunting

Activities on surrounding lands include urban and resort development, a small Parks campsite and day use area, rural residential uses, grazing and mineral extraction .

Current dispositions within the Natural Area are:

- Grazing Permit 790005 - issued annually to Walter Morris; 81 ha (201 acres) of land located on portions of N 22 and W 27; usually grazed by four to five horses from May to October.

- Order-in-Council 327/90 establishing the area as Canmore Flats Natural Area, signed by Lieutenant Governor June 21, 1990.

2.4 Administrative History

The following is an historical summary of the major administrative events which have affected the area:

Pre 1930	Portions of area part of Rocky Mountain Park.
1930	Land withdrawn from park.
1940	Portions of NE and NW of section 14 and SE 22 reserved for powerline right-of-way.
1942	Licence of Occupation (LOC) issued to Calgary Power for portions of NE 14 and NW 20.
1948	LOC issued to Calgary Power for portion of NE 14.
1957	Miscellaneous leases (MLL 343 and MLL 730) issued to Canmore Mines for SE 22 and NW 22, respectively.
1957-1963	Grazing permit (GRP 6939) issued to G.L. Deal for NW 23.
1957-1968	GRP issued for SE 23.
1963	GRP 02571 issued to D. Ashton and B. Musgrove.
1964	GRP 42959 issued to J. L. Parker.
1968	GRP 05321 and roadway reservation issued to D. Ashton and B. Musgrove.
1971	Order-in Council 454/71 established 10 ha Natural Area covering parts of LSD 7, 8 of Section 27-24-10-W5.

1971	Recommendations forwarded to cancel most GRPs but action deferred pending policy clarification.
1972	GRP 42959 expired.
1974	GRP 02571 in NW 22 cancelled.
1975	GRP 6939 in NW 23 cancelled.
1976	Reservation (RLR 5) placed for Natural Area (pt NW 22, pt SW 27).
1978	RLR 5 changed to RLR 3 to allow for grazing.
1979	Grazing Permit (790005) issued to Charles Weatherly and Walter Morris (pt N@22, pt S@ 27-24-10-W5, 86.0 ha).
pre 1982	LOC 1096, EZE 1577, EZE 2613 assigned to Trans Alta Utilities.
1986	Protective notation (PNT 0155.3) placed on SE 14 to protect Bow River.
1987	PNT 0155.3 extended to include NW 14, SE 22 and portion of NE 14.
1987	Plan 7444HX registered to cover Trans-Canada Highway expansion.
1990	Area designated as Canmore Flats Natural Area by Order-in-Council 327/90 on June 21.
1991	Order-in-Council 10/91 deletes lands within MLL 904 and 1609 from Natural Area.

2.5 Natural Area Values and Rationale

The diversity of habitats and associated wildlife, rare plant species and the presence of a highly significant brown and brook trout spawning areas make Canmore Flats an excellent choice for a Natural Area. Due to the area's proximity to both Canmore and Calgary, it has excellent educational potential including opportunities to examine the process of succession and compare wetland and upland communities. Bill Griffiths Creek also provides perhaps the best interpretive potential for brown trout spawning in

this region. The opportunities for canoeing, hiking and wildlife viewing are also excellent.

The existence of a minerals industry, ongoing traditional land uses, an expanding residential population and proposals for tourism resort/recreational developments underscore the need for a management plan to guide the use and protection of this Natural Area. Use of the Natural Area is currently low, but it can be expected to significantly increase in the next few years due to an increase in many of the activities mentioned above. However, the main intent of this Natural Area is one of conservation, and the direction for all management strategies discussed in this plan are formulated on that basis.

3. MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

The following guidelines provide management direction for a variety of uses, issues and activities that are, or could become, problems or conflicts. Allowing for the continued existence of the natural features and processes is the underlying premise on which each management strategy has been developed. Further, staff of Natural Resources Service will endeavour to establish and maintain a positive working relationship with all surrounding landholders and stakeholders.

3.1 Conservation

3.1.1 "Nature Takes Its Course" Policy

As it is the natural features which give the Canmore Flats Natural Area its value, these features will be protected and interference with natural processes will be kept to a minimum.

Some exceptions to this "nature takes its course" policy may be necessary to ensure that the effects of human activities on natural processes will be moderated. These would include: weed and pest control, habitat manipulation, wildlife management and trail construction. Standards will be developed which outline limits of acceptable change to the area.

3.1.2 Fire

Wild fires will be suppressed in accordance with Natural Resources Service Policy on Controlling Wildfires in recreation and protected areas and Land and Forest Services fire management objectives for this general area. Protection of adjacent residents, including

the Town of Canmore and the highways on either side of the Natural Area will be a priority. Fires may also be detrimental to the Natural Area, particularly the hydrological features, if they are severe enough to cause significant vegetation loss, siltation and erosion. Land and Forest Services is responsible for the prevention, detection and suppression of all wildland fires in this area except for those in the surrounding towns and hamlets. Any action required will be taken in cooperation with the Municipal District of Bighorn which is responsible for fires associated with settled areas. Appropriate action will be taken on wildfires outside these areas as required. Notwithstanding the above, future conservation strategies such as habitat manipulation could consider the use of prescribed fire.

3.1.3 Habitat Manipulation

Habitat manipulation will only be considered if it has no significant impacts on threatened, rare or endangered species, fragile or limited natural communities or features, or the natural beauty of the site. The determination of impact significance will be on a case by case basis and will be based on an assessment by Natural Resources Services and Public Lands staff in conjunction with other professionals. The four rare plant species located within the natural area are Antennaria corymbosa, Eleocharis ovata, Salix boothii and Salix sitchensis.

As plant communities mature, some populations of wildlife may be reduced or eliminated due to changes in habitat suitability. Limited habitat manipulation may be undertaken under the direction of the Fish and Wildlife in consultation with other staff. For example, habitat enhancement may be undertaken to maximize the spawning potential of brown trout populations or to ensure the presence of certain early to mid successional plant communities.

3.1.4 Species Manipulation

In exceptional circumstances, if natural features of the natural area (or if adjacent land, resources or facilities) are threatened, it may be necessary to implement a population control program for specific wildlife species. As in section 3.1.3, the significance of the threat will be determined by NRS staff. If mitigative measures are required, it will be directed by Fish and Wildlife in consultation with other NRS and Public Lands staff. Active species reintroduction as a form of manipulation will not be a policy for this Natural Area, but will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.1.5 Exotic Species/Weed and Pest Control

Should exotic species, weeds, pests, wildlife or disease seriously threaten the vegetation of the natural area or if the natural area is acting as a reservoir for pests that are

significantly affecting adjacent agricultural lands or are a threat to public health and safety, control measures will be taken. In the case of exotic species of vegetation, mechanical or biological methods of control are the preferred option. Chemical pesticides or herbicides will be considered only if other means have proven unsuccessful and depending on the severity of the problem. Any use of pesticides will be in accordance with Natural Resources Service Policy on Use Of Pesticides in recreation and protected areas. Any exotic species/pest or wildlife control initiative will be undertaken under the direction of Fish and Wildlife in consultation with other NRS and Public Lands staff. Problem or nuisance wildlife will be managed consistent with Natural Resources Service Policy on Managing Problem or Nuisance Wildlife in recreation and protected areas. The control of weedy species will be the responsibility of the Public Lands staff with the cooperation of NRS staff.

3.1.6 Ground and Surface Water

The hydrology of Canmore Flats defines the character of the area, with the Bow River and associated vegetation communities being a major ecological and aesthetic component. In addition, small underground springs continually feed Bill Griffiths Creek and the nearby minor creeks and slough complex, and are of prime importance in maintaining a constant flow regime. The need for more intensive monitoring of water quality and flow characteristics in the Bow River and Bill Griffiths Creek will be assessed by Alberta Environmental Protection. Natural Resources Service Policy regarding Handling Uncontrolled Releases of Polluting Substances in recreation and protected areas and standard operating procedures of Environmental Protection will serve to mitigate such emergency situations as chemical spills from the railway tracks to the north, or from Highways #1 and #1A. Efforts to find alternative water sources for Burnco Rock Product's gravel operation have been undertaken.

3.1.7 Reclamation

Most disturbed areas, such as abandoned borrow pits, poorly located trails or unauthorized campsite areas will be closed and allowed to revert back to their natural condition or reclaimed with native species if available, or species which will allow for invasion by native species.

3.2 Education and Research

3.2.1 Education/Interpretation

Educational or interpretive use of the Natural Area is generally encouraged and all users should carry out their activities so as to minimize their impacts on the Natural Area. Use will be monitored by the volunteer stewards and staff of the Natural Resources Service

and Public Lands. The benefits of off-site interpretive opportunities will be explored prior to the development of on-site facilities and/or structures. This plan recommends the use of existing facilities at either Bow Valley Provincial Park or the Town of Canmore to provide intensive educational and interpretive opportunities. Simple interpretive signs will be established on-site to accommodate those who wish to visit the Natural Area and to mitigate potential environmental impacts by visitors at trout spawning areas, and at rare plant and sensitive area locations. A viewing area or areas may be required on site in the future, if use levels of the Natural Area increase substantially.

Any proposed educational or interpretive uses that involve removal, disruption or destruction of any natural feature or species must be approved in writing by staff of Natural Resources Service. Funds for approved facility development will normally come from outside government. The role of government could include planning and design and limited maintenance in addition to the monitoring, enforcement and administrative functions.

3.2.2 Research

Research proposals will be considered, provided there is no significant negative impact to the site or other site users. Research related to the management of the site and the species found therein, such as that currently being conducted on brown trout life history, and for the acquisition of biophysical information, will be encouraged. Other research proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval for research activities must be obtained in writing from Public Lands. Research will be carried out consistent with the "Policy For The Management Of Research And Collection Activities In Recreation and Protected Areas Administered By Natural Resources Service, Parks". Information on the policy and permit applications are available from the parks office in Canmore. Consistent with the policy a copy of all research results must be provided and all specimens collected remain the property of the Province of Alberta unless otherwise authorized..

3.3 Recreation

Many types of passive recreation, such as walking, birdwatching, photography, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, berry picking, picnicking and bicycling may occur. However, even passive recreational activities have significant negative impacts on an area if large numbers of people participate in them. Since the Natural Area exists in a very active corridor and near the growing Town of Canmore, special use guidelines will be developed by Public Lands and NRS staff in conjunction with the volunteer steward to ensure the quality of the recreational experience remains high and the natural features are not degraded. The guidelines will be developed around the concept of "limits of acceptable change" and will emphasize the management of existing uses rather than encouraging new uses.

3.3.1 Trails

Public Land Services with assistance from NRS staff and volunteer stewards, will be responsible for maintaining or closing existing trails. Planning for any further trail development that becomes necessary would be done by Natural Resources Service Parks Management staff in Canmore. Such planning will be given a high priority due to the sensitivity of the Natural Area and the potential for increased use in the near future. Any approval for trail development must consider:

1. how additional trail development will impact the natural features of the site;

2. how the new trail will be maintained in the long-term; and

3. how conflicts between different user groups may be minimized by formalizing access and trail routes.

Generally, a trail system should be designed so that it will affect only part of the Natural Area, leaving a part undisturbed and so that it has minimal impacts on the natural features of the site. A trail system would be developed so that it will have no significant impacts on rare, endangered or threatened species, fragile or limited natural communities or natural features. Trail design should be adequate to provide for permitted uses, to prevent erosion and trampling of vegetation, and to prevent weed invasion, but should otherwise be kept to a minimum.

Existing trails are currently multipurpose and created by recurring horse use or individuals on foot. Conflicts between user groups is presently low and consequently, the designation of trails for specific user groups is not required at this time (see section 3.5.1 on Group Use). However, to reduce damage to spawning areas by pedestrians and horses, designated crossing areas will be signed on Bill Griffiths Creek. Locations will be determined through consultation with local users, fisheries biologists and trail planners. Signs will be supplied by the Public Land Services with assistance from Natural Resources Service.

3.3.2 Camping/Picnicking

Currently, random camping occurs in the southeastern corner of the Natural Area. Due to problems associated with fire safety and liability, camping will not be encouraged on the site. Picnicking which does not involve the lighting of fires or the degradation of large areas will be permitted. Facilities for picnicking will not be developed or maintained. Users will be encouraged to clean up the site. Signs will be supplied by Public Lands and maintained by the volunteer steward. Physical restrictions to vehicle access will be considered in the future. Parks Management, Natural Resources Service, will consider

maintaining their nearby Bow River or Three Sisters Campgrounds (Plan ll6JK) during hunting and/or fishing seasons.

3.3.3 Equestrian Use

The Canmore Horse Club currently uses the area for horseback riding. Equestrian use is an acceptable form of recreational activity for this site. Presently, the level of use is relatively low, but use will be monitored by the volunteer steward and may eventually be controlled or phased out if sensitive areas are being degraded or if conflicts arise with other user groups. Designated horse crossing areas over Bill Griffiths Creek will be identified and established.

3.3.4 Hunting

Hunting, consistent with Alberta Fish and Wildlife Services regulations, will be allowed in the Natural Area as a compatible recreational activity. The Bow Corridor is a bow hunting zone, thus hunting with firearms is prohibited in the entire area.

3.3.5 Motorized Vehicle Use

Motorized vehicle use will not be allowed in the Natural Area because the extensive riparian and seepage spring based vegetation is highly susceptible to damage from vehicles. The use of jet boats on the Bow River may also cause the acceleration of bank erosion and will not be encouraged in the Natural Area. Methods to control vehicle use such as fencing, public education and in certain instances, the establishment of regulations, will be employed by Public Lands staff in cooperation with the volunteer steward.

Motorized vehicle use will only be allowed in emergency situations such as fire or when human life or safety may be threatened.

3.3.6 Canoeing

Canoeing is a low-impact means of transportation and therefore, will be permitted within the Natural Area. Appropriate water access points could be identified, however the most suitable access points are probably located outside of the Natural Area.

3.3.7 Fishing

The Bow River, which runs through Canmore Flats Natural Area, comprises the largest and most important sport fishery in the corridor. Bill Griffiths Creek contains about 50 percent of the corridor's spawning brown trout. As is the case with a large number of

fishing sites in the area, the demand placed on the Canmore Flats fisheries likely exceeds supply.

Fish populations will be monitored by Natural Resources fisheries biologists in conjunction with academic researchers. Additional fishing regulations may be considered and developed to protect brown trout and their spawning areas, such as an extension to the closure period, wading restrictions and other measures.

3.3.8 Mushroom/Berry Picking

Berry picking and mushroom picking are traditional uses of the area and usually have minimal impact on the integrity of the natural features or survival of animal species. These activities will continue to be acceptable pursuits in the Natural Area as long as there are no significant impacts, such as a reduction in populations of plant or mushroom species or a significant reduction in food for birds or small mammals.

3.4 Resource Extraction

In general, for any resource-consuming activity, the onus is on the proponent of that activity to prove that it will not create a negative impact on the resource values of the site or on the educational, research or recreational users. Generally, such activities are not suitable for this protected area. Any proposals for uses requiring a disposition can only be approved by the Minister, according to the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act (1981).

Further, the existing General Municipal Plan for the Municipal District of Bighorn prohibits resource extraction activity on floodplain lands including the Natural Area.

3.4.1 Grazing

Grazing of horses on part of the Natural Area has occurred since 1957. The grazing has resulted in a change to the understorey, particularly in the seepage areas. The grazing permit will be allowed to continue until the present permittee no longer requires the area for grazing horses. The grazing use will be discontinued at that time. Until then, grazing patterns and stocking rates will be reviewed and a Range Management Plan will be developed by Public Lands staff in consultation with the NRS staff to ensure that proper livestock distribution is occurring and that the grazing use does not create further changes to the natural vegetation. The intent will be to reclaim the natural vegetation on areas which may have been impacted by past grazing. The reassignment of the grazing permit by the holder will not be approved so that phasing out of the permit will be facilitated in the future.

Existing old wire fencing within the Natural Area but outside the grazing permit area will be cleaned up as time and volunteer help is available.

3.4.2 Timber Removal

Since mature forests contribute greatly to the aesthetic and wildland values of the Natural Area, no commercial or public tree cutting will be permitted. Some limited tree cutting may be required for authorized trail construction or other permitted activities. Due to the value of snags and decaying trees to certain species, any removal will be kept to a minimum.

3.4.3 Petroleum and Natural Gas

Oil and gas exploration and development (including surface access) will not be allowed in the Natural Area to prevent problems associated with increased access and to reduce surface disturbances.

3.4.4 Surface Material Extraction

An abandoned borrow pit exists on site, as does an old basket trolley which straddles a portion of the Bow River and which was likely used for some extractive purposes. The former will be actively reclaimed by the volunteer steward with assistance from Public Lands Division. The latter will be left in place as an interesting historical artifact.

Extraction of surface materials, such as sand and gravel, will not be permitted in the Natural Area. These activities have significant impacts on the natural features and would conflict with the recreational and conservation uses of the site.

3.4.5 Trapping

Currently, a yearly permit is issued to trap beaver around Bill Griffiths Creek. Trapping will be allowed on the Natural Area as currently administered by Natural Resources Service. As there is some evidence suggesting beaver dams help regulate the water flow of the creek and thus benefit the spawning activities of brown trout, the effects of beaver dams as well as continued trapping will be closely monitored.

3.4.6 Water

Burnco Rock Products Ltd. has a gravel pit on the northeast side of Highway #1A, across from the Natural Area. The company has a water licence for a temporary water pumping station on Bill Griffiths Creek, inside the Natural Area boundary. This feeds water through a pipe located under the highway to their operations on the other side. This water

intake is held under a Licence of Occupation. The company has been investigating alternative water sources with a view to eliminating their creek intake. Staff will monitor and encourage these efforts.

3.5 Other Issues

3.5.1 Group Use

The site is occasionally used by schools and organized groups. If group use of the area increases to the level where conflicts between groups occur, a booking system will be coordinated by the Natural Resources Service in Canmore. If group use degrades the natural values of any portion of the Natural Area, zoning or the restriction of group size may be implemented.

3.5.2 Access and Roads

Public access to Canmore Flats Natural Area has traditionally been via non-motorized means such as by horse, canoe or on foot. Canoe and foot access are preferred and will be encouraged due to their low-impact on the natural features of the area.

No formal designated parking areas, trails or water access points presently exist to serve this Natural Area. Most foot access is from informal parking areas off the 1A Highway. "Old Camp" Day Use Site is a designated parking/picnic area along the 1A Highway but, like all the informal sites, requires illegal and dangerous crossings of the CPR mainline to enter the Natural Area. There is no potential for designated foot access off the Trans-Canada Highway. This is due to severe restrictions on both new parking area development as well as footpath designation within and parallel to the right-of-way.

The need and possible locations for safe, designated parking and trail facilities will be evaluated by staff of Public Land Services in conjunction with Natural Resources Service staff, and Alberta Transportation and Utilities. Development of formal facilities along the 1A Highway will require agreement with the CPR on a safe crossing situation.

Horse use is currently an acceptable means of access, but will be managed as per section 3.3.3 of this report. Two old roads are located on the site, one being within the grazing permit and the other in the southeast, leading from a borrow pit to heavily disturbed campsites by the river. The former will be allowed to revegetate naturally once grazing is phased out. The latter road will be blocked off and the general area be actively reclaimed under the direction of Public Land Services staff.

3.5.3 Linear Developments

No linear developments such as bladed or graded road developments, pipelines and powerlines will be permitted due to surface disturbances and access problems. The only exception is trail development (see section 3.3 Trails) or possible future expansion of nearby existing roadways (Trans Canada Highway for example) when no other reasonable alternative is available. The existing utility corridor will be retained, but only limited mechanical brush removal for vegetation control will be permitted. Permission must be received in writing from the Public Lands Branch which manages the utility corridor dispositions.

3.5.4 Off Site Issues

Several off-site issues need to be addressed for the effective management of the Natural Area.

The first issue is the means by which the CPR controls vegetation along its tracks, which border the northern portion of the area. The potential exists for chemicals, if used in vegetation control, to leach into Bill Griffiths Creek and harm trout populations. Chemical or toxic spills may also result from derailed or damaged rail cars. Public Lands and Natural Resources Service staff will enter into discussions with CPR officials to determine what, if any, policy changes by the railway company would be desirable to protect the Natural Area from these types of contaminations. A related concern is CPR maintenance of the track's bed through the laying down of coarse gravels. The integrity of portions of the banks along Bill Griffiths Creek is being altered. The effects of this alteration to the various stages of brown trout spawning will be examined by NRS fisheries biologists and raised with CPR administration if a problem is identified. Litter concerns will be handled in the same manner.

The second is the potential future expansion of Highway #1 and #1A and how this may further affect water flows or the movement of species through the area. Public Lands and Natural Resources staff will be involved in any future discussion related to highway expansion through the present referral process.

The third is the expansion of, and current activities in the Town of Canmore. This relates both to the downstream effects of the town's sewage, the potential pollution problem from nearby lands, especially the industrial park to the northwest, and the isolation of the Natural Area by townsite expansion. Natural Resources Service staff will examine current activities within Canmore and work with the Town and volunteers to prevent or mitigate the negative impacts of developments on the Natural Area.

3.6 Approval of Activities not Discussed in this Plan

Specific activities may be identified which are not discussed in this plan. For these activities to be approved, they must:

a) be compatible with the objectives for the Natural Area;

b) not damage rare, endangered or threatened species or their habitats;

c) not damage significant or special features of the Natural Area or impair its aesthetic values;

d) be approved by the Environmental Resource Committee of the Southern East Slopes Region, Environmental Protection.

4. PROGRAM SUPPORT

4.1 Physical Structures

4.1.1 Signage

Signs indicating the name of the site will be provided by Parks Management, Natural Resources Service, and placed at appropriate locations along Highway #1 and #1A. 'Natural Area' boundary signs will be supplied by Parks Management and strategically placed around the perimeter of the area. The provision, installation and maintenance of approved directional and interpretive signs along trails and at access points will also be the responsibility of the volunteer stewards or sponsors. Prior to installation, approval must be received in writing from Natural Resources Service in Canmore.

4.1.2 Facilities

There will be no facilities established on the site in the near future. Facilities that may become necessary to protect the natural features and ensure public safety are a staging area, hardened trails and viewing areas in the more heavily used areas, and signed parking with interpretive, toilet and garbage facilities. This would most likely be along the 1A Highway outside the Natural Area boundary. Safe crossing of the CPR tracks would have to be addressed.

4.2 Regulations and Enforcement

The establishment of new regulations may be required for the effective enforcement of many of the management strategies outlined in this plan. If monitoring determines that regulations are required they will be developed by Natural Resources Service pursuant to the Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act. Enforcement of existing regulations will be provided by government agencies under their existing mandates. Signs will be erected and maintained to inform users of existing rules and regulations.

4.3 Site Monitoring

Regular on-site monitoring will be the joint responsibility of staff of Public Lands, Natural Resources Service and the volunteer stewards. Monitoring will ensure that, or determine whether or not, values are being maintained. To monitor visitor use levels of the Natural Area, a visitor registry will be established and maintained by the volunteer stewards at access points.

4.4 Communications

Natural Resources Service and Public Lands will supply signs for the Canmore Flats Natural Area. Any publications, such as educational packages and trail guides, will be the responsibility of user groups and/or public sponsors with the approval and support of NRS staff.

5. ADMINISTRATION

Administration and management of the Canmore Flats Natural Area will be the joint responsibility of provincial government agencies as identified throughout the plan. However, "a user maintained site" philosophy will prevail.

5.1 Role of Volunteer Steward

To date, the Upper Bow Valley Fish and Game Association has stepped forward to assume the responsibilities of volunteer steward. This group consists of local people who have come together with the common goal of protecting the natural features of the area and promoting nature-oriented activities.

In all respects, the stewards responsibilities will conform to the standards set out by the Natural Areas Volunteer Steward Program. The volunteer stewards for the Natural Area

are to assist staff of Public Lands and Natural Resources Service in patrolling, inspecting and reporting on the conditions of the Natural Area, as well as providing input to the planning process. They will have no enforcement role, and in witnessing a questionable act they will only, OBSERVE, RECORD, AND REPORT.

As a minimum requirement, their tasks will include:

- visiting the Natural Area twice per year
- observing and reporting to the government staff any destruction or alteration of the site through inappropriate activities
- locating and maintaining signs along the Natural Area boundary
- completing and submitting an annual Natural Area inspection form to the designated local government contact.

Additional projects could be considered, depending on the interest, time and experience of the volunteer stewards. Project ideas should be submitted for consideration by Public Lands and Natural Resources Service.

5.2 Role of Municipal District of Bighorn

Under the Planning Act, the Municipal District of Bighorn is responsible for reviewing, approving and issuing development permits for any permanent structures on lands within the Municipal District. While most developments undertaken by the Alberta Government are exempt from the Planning Act, the Municipal District will work with volunteer stewards or other non-government organizations in the posting of signs or other matters that are not exempt from the Act.

The Municipal District of Bighorn, along with the Land and Forest Services, will respond to wildfires within the Natural Area in accordance with fire management objectives for the general area.

5.3 Roles of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Food and Rural Development

The co-ordination of plan implementation and administration of the site is the main responsibility of the Public Land Services, with assistance from NRS staff.

Staff of NRS and Public Lands in the region will provide technical advice and support to, and work closely with, the volunteer stewards in managing and maintaining this site.

Funding responsibilities will be limited to the provision of a brochure, signs, and reclamation work, depending on budget availability.

Natural Resources Service - Fish and Wildlife will continue to be responsible for administering wildlife and fisheries regulations and, with written approval of the Southern East Slopes Environmental Resource Committee, for implementing any habitat manipulation or problem wildlife management programs. Land and Forest Services will be responsible for assisting with fire suppression in the Canmore Flats Natural Area.

5.4 Process for Plan Amendments

The management plan is based on existing knowledge of the site and, consequently, is currently valid. Conditions change and, therefore, existing guidelines require regular monitoring and evaluation.

As new issues arise, they will be dealt with to follow, as closely as possible, the intent for the site. Should changes to the management plan be required, they will be noted on the covering sheet and the involved agencies/groups will be informed and consulted if necessary. Southern East Slopes Environmental Resource Committee and the existing Management Advisory Committee will be involved in all plan amendments.

Major review of the Management Plan will be considered at five-year intervals. In exceptional cases, a review may be requested and initiated when a new and substantial issue/concern arises or as new information becomes available. In the case of Canmore Flats Natural Area, exceptional cases would include those varied pressures exerted by existing and planned development activities within the Bow Corridor.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Where to From Here?

This plan was developed to set out the management guidelines and intent for the Canmore Flats Natural Area.

Staff of Public Land Services and Natural Resources Service will continue to work closely with the volunteer steward and the Management Advisory Committee in implementing this plan. As new issues arise, they will be dealt with to follow the intent for the site as closely as possible. Necessary amendments to the plan will be dealt with as outlined in Section 5.

Controlled public use will continue to be encouraged and monitored. Minimal facilities will be installed to protect the natural features of the site and to manage human use. Those facilities directed toward enhancement of educational use will be encouraged off-site for the foreseeable future.

6.2 For Further Information

If you want more information on this plan or the Canmore Flats Natural Area, or how you can become involved in public sponsorship, or if you have any comments, please contact:

Land Resource Agrologist
Public Land Services
Field Services Sector
Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
703 - 6th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 0T9
(403) 297-6426

or

Natural Resource Services - Parks Management/Fish and Wildlife
Alberta Environmental Protection
Suite 201, 800 Railway Ave.
Canmore, Alberta
T1W 1P1
(403) 678-5508

REFERENCES CITED

Alberta, 1990 — Bow Corridor Local Integrated Resource Plan. Draft. Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, Calgary. Pub. No. I/301.

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APPENDICES

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

WILDERNESS AREAS, ECOLOGICAL RESERVES AND NATURAL AREAS ACT

Revised Statutes of Alberta 1980, Chapter W-8
with amendments in force as of June 5, 1987
not including unproclaimed amendments

Consolidated June 7, 1989

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NOTE

All persons making use of this consolidation are reminded that it has no legislative sanction, that the amendments have been embodied for convenience of reference only, and that the original Acts should be consulted for all purposes of interpreting and applying the law.

UNPROCLAIMED AMENDMENTS

This consolidation incorporates only those amendments in force on the date shown on the cover. It does not include the following amendments not proclaimed in force on that date:

RSA 1980 c12 (Supp.) s1(25), which amends the Schedule.

REGULATIONS

The following is a list of the regulations made under the *Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act* that are filed as Alberta Regulations under the *Regulations Act* as of the consolidation date shown on the cover:

Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves and Natural Areas Act

	Alta. Reg.	*Amendments*
Ecological Reserves		
Athabasca Dunes	313/88	
Crow Lake	275/87	
Goose Mountain	314/88	
Hand Hills	14/88	
Kennedy Coulee	435/87	
Kootenay Plains	277/87	
Marshybank	278/87	
Silver Valley	279/87	
Upper Bob Creek	48/89	
Wainwright Dunes	15/88	
Whitemud Falls	315/88	
Natural Areas		
Kootenay Plains	265/78	
Natural Areas Designation	47/85	*41/87, 121/87, 125/87, 247/87, 344/87, 368/87, 369/87, 373/87, 456/87, 481/87*

WILDERNESS AREAS, ECOLOGICAL RESERVES AND NATURAL AREAS ACT

CHAPTER W-8

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Schedule

Preamble

WHEREAS the continuing expansion of industrial development and settlement in Alberta will leave progressively fewer areas in their natural state; and

WHEREAS it is in the public interest that certain areas of Alberta be protected and managed for the purposes of preserving their natural beauty and safeguarding them from impairment and industrial development; and

WHEREAS to carry out these purposes for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations it is desirable to establish certain kinds of areas and reserves and to provide varying degrees of protection to those areas and reserves;

1981 c76 s3

THEREFORE HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, enacts as follows:

Definitions

1 In this Act,

(a) "Advisory Committee" means the Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves;

(b) "controlled buffer zone" means an area of land designated as a controlled buffer zone by the regulations;

(b.1) "ecological reserve" means land designated as an ecological reserve under section 3.1;

(c) "government agency" means

(i) a corporation that is an agent of the Crown in right of Alberta, or

(ii) a corporation, commission, board or other body empowered to exercise quasi-judicial or governmental functions and whose members are appointed by an Act of the Legislature, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, or a Minister of the Crown, or any combination thereof;

(d) "Minister" means

(i) in the case of a wilderness area or ecological reserve, the Minister of Recreation and Parks, and

(ii) in the case of a natural area, the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife;

(d.1) "natural area" means land designated as a natural area under section 12.1;

(e) "public land" means land of the Crown in right of Alberta;

(f) "wilderness area" means an area of land specified in the Schedule as a wilderness area.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s1;1981 c76 s4;1986 cD-20.5 s17

Advisory Committee

2(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council shall establish a committee called the "Advisory Committee on Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves" consisting of 12 members and shall designate one of the members as chairman.

(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may prescribe the term of office of any member of the Committee and the term of office of the chairman.

(3) The Minister shall designate a member of the Advisory Committee as the secretary to the Committee.

(4) The Advisory Committee shall consist of

(a) 2 employees of the Department of Recreation and Parks,

(b) 1 employee of the Department of Energy,

(b.1) 2 employees of the Department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife,

(c) 1 employee of the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, and

(d) 6 persons who are not employed by the Government or a government agency.

(5) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may authorize, fix and provide for the payment of remuneration and expenses to any of the members of the Advisory Committee who are not employees of the Government or of a government agency.

(6) The Advisory Committee shall meet at the call of the chairman, or at the direction of the Minister.

(7) The Advisory Committee shall receive and consider requests from the public regarding wilderness areas and ecological reserves and may make recommendations to the Minister regarding

(a) the establishment of new wilderness areas or ecological reserves;

(b) the addition of land to wilderness areas or ecological reserves;

(c) the withdrawal of land from wilderness areas or ecological reserves;

(d) the making of regulations for the administration, management, operation and utilization of wilderness areas, ecological reserves and controlled buffer zones.

(8) The Minister shall refer any recommendations made by the Advisory Committee under subsection (7) to the Executive Council for its consideration.

(9) A copy of any recommendation made by the Advisory Committee under subsection (7) shall be laid before the Legislative Assembly by the Minister if it is in session and if not, within 15 days after the commencement of the next ensuing session.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s2;1981 c76 s5;1986 cD-18.1 s14; 1986 cD-20.5 s16;1987 c20 s9

Wilderness areas

3 The areas of land described in the Schedule to this Act are established as wilderness areas.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s3

Ecological reserves

3.1(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council, in order to preserve public lands for ecological purposes, may by regulation designate as an ecological reserve any area of public land that, in his opinion,

(a) is suitable for scientific research associated with the studies of natural ecosystems,

(b) is a representative example of a natural ecosystem in Alberta,

(c) serves as an example of an ecosystem that has been modified by man and that offers an opportunity to study the recovery of the ecosystem from that modification,

(d) contains rare or endangered native plants or animals that should be preserved, or

(e) contains unique or rare examples of natural biological or physical features.

(2) No ecological reserve shall be established or disestablished, and the area constituting an ecological reserve shall not be altered, unless public notice of the proposed establishment, disestablishment or alteration is given.

(3) A public notice under subsection (2) shall

(a) state whether the proposed action under this section involves the establishment, disestablishment or alteration of an ecological reserve,

(b) state the effective date of the proposed action,

(c) give the legal description of the public land affected by the proposed action,

(d) if a public hearing is to be held under section 4, give the date of the public hearing,

(e) give the name and address of the person to whom representations may be made, and

(f) be published at least 60 days prior to the effective date of the proposed action in

(i) The Alberta Gazette,

(ii) at least one issue of a daily newspaper in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Red Deer, and

(iii) at least one issue of a daily or other periodical newspaper, if any, that has a regular circulation in the immediate vicinity of the public land affected by the proposed action.

1981 c76 s6

Hearings

4(1) The Environment Council of Alberta, when requested by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, shall hold public hearings for the purpose of receiving and hearing submissions and representations respecting any proposal made by the Executive Council for the establishment of a new wilderness area or ecological reserve or the addition of any land to, or the withdrawal of any land from, an existing wilderness area or ecological reserve.

(2) The Minister may authorize the holding of public hearings for the purpose of receiving and hearing submissions and representations respecting

(a) any recommendations made by the Advisory Committee under section 2(7), or

(b) any other matter pertaining to the administration and management of wilderness areas or ecological reserves.

1981 c76 ss7,16

Programs

5 The Minister may carry out or cause to be carried out measures or programs in a wilderness area or ecological reserve, or approve the carrying out by other persons of measures or programs in a wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(a) for the management and preservation of the animal and plant life and the environment of the wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(b) for environmental research that does not involve any physical disturbance of the wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(b.1) for the furtherance of public education and interpretation, and

(c) generally, for the preservation and protection of the wilderness area or ecological reserve.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s5;1981 c76 ss8,16

Termination of leases, permits etc.

6(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), if at the time any public land is established as part of a wilderness area or ecological reserve or is added to a wilderness area or ecological reserve a person other than the Crown holds, in respect of that land, an interest under or pursuant to

(a) a disposition granted under the *Public Lands Act* and the regulations under that Act,

(b) a lease, permit, easement or other disposition under the *Special Areas Act* and the regulations under that Act,

(c) a timber disposition as defined in the *Forests Act*,

(d) a surface disposition granted under any other Act or regulation, or

(e) a disposition as defined in the *Mines and Minerals Act*,

the Minister of the Crown who is charged with the administration of the relevant Act referred to in clauses (a) to (e) shall ensure as far as practicable that the interest is withdrawn, cancelled or otherwise terminated as soon as possible.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply so as to require the Minister of Energy to withdraw, cancel or otherwise terminate an interest under a petroleum or natural gas disposition in an ecological reserve.

(3) The Minister of Recreation and Parks may, when an ecological reserve is established or added to, permit interests under

(a) dispositions granted under the *Public Lands Act* or the *Special Areas Act* and the regulations under those Acts in connection with a petroleum or natural gas disposition made under the *Mines and Minerals Act*,

(b) other dispositions granted under the *Public Lands Act* and the regulations under that Act,

(c) leases, permits, easements and other dispositions under the *Special Areas Act* and the regulations under that Act,

(d) timber licences and timber permits under the *Forests Act*, and

(e) permits to graze livestock granted under the *Forest Reserves Act* and the regulations under that Act

that exist on or relate to the ecological reserve or the land added to the ecological reserve at the time the ecological reserve is established or added to, as the case may be, to continue until their expiry and to be renewed, but no interest referred to in clauses (a) to (e) may be continued or renewed unless the Minister of Recreation and Parks consents in writing to the continuation or renewal.

1981 c76 s9;1986 cD-18.1 s14

Prohibition

7(1) Subject to section 6, the Crown

(a) shall not, on land that has been established as a wilderness area, dispose or permit the disposition on its behalf of any of the interests referred to in section 6(1), and

(b) shall not, on land that has been established as an ecological reserve, dispose or permit the disposition on its behalf of any of the interests referred to in section 6(1)(a) to (d).

(2) No Minister of the Crown or government agency, or other person authorized by an Act to do so, shall grant any permission, whether termed as approval, consent, permit, licence, certificate, order or otherwise, which would in the absence of this subsection empower the person to whom it is granted to expropriate or acquire any estate or interest in land in a wilderness area or ecological reserve.

(3) No Minister of the Crown, government agency or other person on behalf of the Crown shall

(a) construct, maintain, repair or operate any public work, road, railway, aircraft landing strip, helicopter base, structure or installation in a wilderness area or ecological reserve, or

(b) expend or authorize expenditure of any money for any of those purposes.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s7;1981 c76 ss10,16

Prohibited activities

8(1) No person shall

(a) travel in a wilderness area except on foot,

(b) hunt or trap animals in a wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(c) fish in a wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(d) land an aircraft in a wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(e) deposit any litter, garbage or refuse in a wilderness area or ecological reserve except in places provided and designated for that purpose,

(f) unless authorized by the Minister, collect, destroy or remove any plant life or animal life (or bird eggs) or excavate or remove fossils or other objects of geological, ethnological, historical or scientific interest in a wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(g) take into or use in a wilderness area a horse or pack animal or any motorized vehicle,

(h) introduce into, deposit in or add to a wilderness area or ecological reserve a material or substance that is or may be harmful to plant or animal life in the wilderness area or ecological reserve,

(i) operate a motorized vehicle or motor boat in an ecological reserve except on routes or in areas designated for that purpose under the regulations,

(j) light or maintain an open fire in an ecological reserve, or

(k) without the consent of the Minister

(i) construct, reconstruct or add to an improvement on, or

(ii) do any act that will alter or disturb the surface of

land within a wilderness area or ecological reserve.

(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s8;1981 c76 ss11,16

Exceptions

9 Sections 7(3) and 8 do not apply to any of the following actions by the Minister or by persons authorized by the Minister:

(a) the carrying out of measures or programs referred to in section 5;

(b) the use of any equipment or means of transportation for the purpose of, or the doing of any act in connection with,

(i) the prevention or extinguishing of forest fires,

(ii) the prevention of damage to natural resources or property, or

(iii) emergencies involving the health or safety of persons.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s9

Offences

10(1) A person who destroys or damages or pollutes any land, water, plant life or animal life in a wilderness area or ecological reserve is guilty of an offence.

(2) Subsection (1) does not appiy to a person who destroys or damages plant life or animal life in a wilderness area or ecological reserve in the course of removing it under the authority of the Minister given under section 8(1)(f) or while carrying out an activity consented to by the Minister under section 8(1)(k).

RSA 1980 cW-8 s10;1981 c76 ss12,16

Travel restrictions

11(1) The Minister may by order prohibit or restrict travel in a wilderness area or ecological reserve during any period either absolutely or except under the authority of a permit issued by or on behalf of the Minister.

(2) A person who contravenes an order of the Minister under subsection (1) is guilty of an offence.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s11;1981 c76 s16

Controlled buffer zones

12(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, by regulation, designate any area of public land adjoining a wilderness area or ecological reserve as a controlled buffer zone.

(2) On an area of land being designated as a controlled buffer zone

(a) the Surface Rights Board established under the *Surface Rights Act* shall not make any order under that Act granting right of entry, use or taking of the surface of any land in a controlled buffer zone for the purpose of strip mining or quarrying,

(b) the Minister of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife shall not issue or renew a lease under the *Public Lands Act* which would permit the use of the surface of any land in a controlled buffer zone for the purpose of strip mining or quarrying, and

(c) no person shall cause, allow or undertake any strip mining or quarrying in the controlled buffer zone.

(3) On an area of land being designated as a controlled buffer zone

(a) no licence, interim licence or permit shall be issued under the *Water Resources Act* for any diversion, undertaking or works, and

(b) no person shall cause or allow or undertake any diversion, undertaking or works in the controlled buffer zone.

(4) In this section "licence", "diversion", "undertaking" and "works" have the same meanings that they have in the *Water Resources Act*.

(5) A person who contravenes subsection (2)(c) or (3)(b) is guilty of an offence.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s12;1981 c76 ss13,16;1986 cD-20.5 s17

Natural areas

12.1(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may, in order to

(a) protect sensitive or scenic public land from disturbance, and

(b) ensure the availability of public land in a natural state for use by the public for recreation, education or any other purpose,

by regulation designate any area of public land as a natural area.

(2) Land that has been designated as a natural area under the *Public Lands Act*, the *Provincial Parks Act* or a predecessor of either of those Acts is deemed to have been designated under this Act, and the designation is continued under this Act.

(3) No disposition as defined in the *Public Lands Act* or timber disposition as defined in the *Forests Act* shall be made by or on behalf of the Crown in relation to land in a natural area without the consent of the Minister.

1981 c76 s14

Penalties

13 A person who is guilty of an offence under this Act or the regulations is liable

(a) for the first offence, to a fine of not less than $50 and not more than $1000 and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term of not more than 60 days,

(b) for a 2nd offence, to a fine of not less than $100 and not more than $5000 and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term of not more than 120 days, and

(c) for a 3rd or subsequent offence

(i) in the case of a natural person, to imprisonment for a term of not less than one month and not more than 6 months, or

(ii) in the case of a corporation, to a fine of not less than $10 000 and not more than $50 000.

RSA 1980 cW-8 s13

Regulations

14(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting the administration, management, operation and utilization of wilderness areas, ecological reserves, natural areas and controlled buffer zones.

(2) A regulation under subsection (1) may, without restricting the generality of subsection (1), transfer to any Minister of the Crown powers and duties under this Act in relation to all or any part of a wilderness area, ecological reserve, natural area or controlled buffer zone.

1981 c76 s15

SCHEDULE

WILDERNESS AREAS

GHOST RIVER WILDERNESS AREA

All those parcels or tracts of land, situated, lying, and being in the Province of Alberta, Canada, and being composed of:

All those portions of what would be if surveyed under the system of surveys under the *Surveys Act*, townships twenty-seven (27) and twenty-eight (28), ranges ten (10) and eleven (11), west of the fifth (5) meridian, which are shown outlined in red on a plan of Ghost River Wilderness area of record in the Department of Recreation and Parks at Edmonton as Number 1431 Temporary.

The land herein described containing fifty-nine and fourteen hundredths (59.14) square miles, more or less.

SIFFLEUR WILDERNESS AREAS

All those parcels or tracts of land, situated, lying, and being in unsurveyed territory in the Province of Alberta, Canada, and being composed of:

All those portions of unsurveyed townships thirty-three (33) to thirty-five (35) inclusive, range sixteen (16), townships thirty-two (32) to thirty-five (35) inclusive, range seventeen (17) and townships thirty-three (33) and thirty-four (34), ranges eighteen (18) and nineteen (19), all west of the fifth (5) meridian, as shown outlined in red upon a map or plan of the said portions of record in the Department of Recreation and Parks at Edmonton as No. 1370 Temporary. The land herein described containing one hundred and fifty-nine and thirteen hundredths (159.13) square miles, more or less.

WHITE GOAT WILDERNESS AREA

All that parcel or tract of land, situated, lying, and being in the Province of Alberta, Canada, and being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at a point on the east boundary of Banff National Park, distant three hundred (300) yards northwesterly measured along the said boundary from its intersection with the Norman Creek-Pinto Lake Trail in unsurveyed township thirty-six (36), range twenty-one (21), west of the fifth (5) meridian; thence in a northeasterly direction parallel to the said trail to a point on the left bank of the Cline River, which point is approximately four hundred (400) yards downstream from where the said trail first crosses the Cline River; thence downstream following the sinuosities of the said bank to a point on the said bank opposite the mouth of a small unnamed creek; which point is approximately one (1) mile upstream from the confluence of the said Cline River with Coral Creek in unsurveyed township thirty-seven (37), range eighteen (18), west

of the fifth (5) meridian; thence northwesterly following the height of land forming the west boundary of the watershed of Coral Creek and continuing along the height of land forming the easterly and northerly boundary of the watershed of McDonald Creek to Mount McDonald in unsurveyed township thirty-nine (39), range twenty-one (21), west of the fifth (5) meridian; thence southerly approximately one (1) mile to an unnamed peak; thence westerly down the slope of this latter peak to the source of the easterly fork of an unnamed creek; thence westerly and northerly following the unnamed creek to its intersection with the east boundary of Jasper National Park in unsurveyed township thirty-nine (39), range twenty-one (21), west of the fifth (5) meridian; thence southerly, southwesterly and southeasterly following the east boundary of Jasper and Banff National Parks to the point of commencement.

The land herein described containing one hundred and seventy-one and sixty-five hundredths (171.65) square miles, more or less.

RSA 1980 cW-8 Schedule

Schedule 12

CANMORE FLATS NATURAL AREA

All those parcels or tracts of land, situate, lying and being in the 24th township, in the 10th range, west of the 5th meridian, in the Province of Alberta, Canada, and being composed of:

FIRSTLY

All those portions of legal subdivisions 13 and 14 of section 14, the east half of section 14, and the south half and north west quarter of section 22 which lie to the north and east of the northeasterly limit of a road, as shown on plan 7444 HX (FLW No. 3497 RD).

SECONDLY

All those portions of the north half and south east quarter of section 23, the south west quarter of section 26 and the south east and north west quarters of section 27 which lie to the south and west of the southwesterly limit of a railway, as shown on plan R.Y. 10 (FLW No. 50 R).

THIRDLY

All those portions of the south west quarter of section 27 and the south east quarter of section 28 which lie to the north and east of the northeasterly limit of the said road, as shown on the said plan 7444 HX (FLW No. 3497 RD), and which lie to the south of the southerly limit of the said railway, as shown on the said plan R.Y. 10 (FLW No. 50 R).

FOURTHLY

The north east quarter of section 22
The south west quarter of section 23
Including areas covered by waters of the Bow River and other water bodies within the above listed lands.

Saving and Excepting:

1. All that portion of the west half of section 22 required for a Waysite Campsite as shown on plan no. 116 JK (2184 Gen).

2. All that portion of the south east quarter of section 22 required for a road as shown on plan no. 731490 (6006 RD).

3. All that portion of the west half of the west half of legal subdivision 11 of section 27 of the said township lying generally to the south of the southerly limit of a railway right-of-way plan No. R.Y. 10 (FLW No. 50 T), and all that portion of the west half of the west half of legal subdivision 6 of the said section 27 lying generally to the north and east of the left bank of the Bow River.

4. All those portions of the east half and the east half of the west half of legal subdivision 11 of section 27 of the said township lying generally to the south and west of the southwesterly limit of the said railway right-of-way plan No. R.Y. 10 (FLW No. 50 R), all that portion of legal subdivision 3 of the said section 27 lying generally to the north of the left bank of the Bow River, and all those portions of the east half and the east half of the west half of legal subdivision 6 of the said section 27 lying generally to the south and west of the said southwesterly limit of the said railway right-of-way and to the north and east of the said left bank of the Bow River, as shown upon a map or plan of survey of the said township approved and confirmed at Ottawa on the 22nd day of October , 1928.

5. All mines and minerals.

Date Typed: December 19, 1990 (3122o)

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